

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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A RED SISTER.

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CHAPTER XXXVII.

IF Lady Honor could have had her wish, and have found a hiding-place for herself in the library during Lady Joan's interview with Dr. Gallagher, the first name she would have heard on Gallagher's lips would, contrary to her expectations, have been not Herrick's, not Lois's, but her own. "This young lady must have our first attention, my lady," she would have heard the man saying, in his usual oily tone; "if we don't mind what we're about, we shall have Mr. Gaskell back at Longridge before we know where we are."

"We," "our." For all the world as if they were two men rowing in one boat, or two soldiers defending one citadel, or two sailors trying to bring a leaky vessel into port.

A few months back Lady Joan, with a word or look, would have frozen into silence and respect any man who had dared thus to bracket his interests with hers. Now, instead of rebuff, he received simply the question:

"What do you advise?"

A big blazing fire crackled up the library chimney. Lady Joan had drawn her chair as close to it as it could well go. Sideways to her, and facing the light, sat Gallagher, leaning forward, with his arms resting on a small table, and his eyes from beneath his bushy brows closely scrutinising her face.

Seen thus in the full light of the wintry sunshine, the man assuredly was not "good to look at." Lady Honor, in the brief glimpse which she had had of him,

had seen only that he was lean and sinuous in figure; dark-skinned, and dark-haired. If she could have had a full view of him, now as he faced the light, she would have further noted that he had sunken, restless eyes set very close together, bushy eyebrows, a flat forehead, and face literally scored with oblique wrinkles.

"My advice is very simple," he said, mellifluously still, in reply; "the young lady has asked for her cousin's address, and is, no doubt, bent on keeping him in touch with events here. Very well, then; supply her with an address to which she may post her letters. Those letters will be a splendid outlet for her energy, of which you say she has enough and to spare, and will do harm to nobody."

"Supply her with an address!" repeated Lady Joan, blankly. "I do not understand you."

Gallagher gave a short, low laugh—a laugh which, strange to say, set not one of those oblique wrinkles of his moving, nor as much as raised a sparkle in his eye.

"Ah, my lady, you haven't knocked about the world and had the experience of life that I have, or you would catch at my meaning more quickly." Here he felt in his waistcoat-pocket and drew thence a card.

"On this card," he continued, "is the address of an old friend of mine at Cleve's Hill, Luton West, California. Now, my lady, if you'll be good enough to transfer this address to the back of an envelope with Mr. Gaskell's name upon it—in which you have already placed a blank sheet of paper—and seal, and leave it lying about as if ready for the post, I'll wager ten to one that the Lady Honor lights upon it, and forthwith pours out her confidences to her cousin in a letter similarly addressed.

I will, on my part, take the precaution of writing to my old friend, asking him to return all letters addressed to Mr. Gaskell to me. Now do you understand me, my lady?"

Lady Joan took the card which he held towards her, glanced at it, tossed it contemptuously on to a side table.

"I am not in the habit of descending to subterfuges of this sort," she said, with a flash of her old haughty manner.

Gallagher eyed her keenly for a moment, beneath his bent, bushy eyebrows. He did not press the matter farther, however; but changed the subject suddenly—one might almost say with a jerk.

"I heard from my wife at Ballinacrae last night," he said; "that was my real reason for coming over to the Castle this morning."

Lady Joan was all attention at once.

"And the girl—Lucy Harwood—how is she?" she asked, turning towards him.

He shrugged his shoulders. "Her health is exactly what one would expect in the child of such a mother—capricious; one day she is out walking, the next she is in bed."

Lady Joan seemed to keep her self-control with difficulty. "Tell me exactly what her mental condition is, I am deeply interested in the girl," she said, with an ill-disguised eagerness.

"No doubt," he answered. Did Lady Joan's ears deceive her, or was there the suspicion of a sneer in his voice? "Well, my lady, at the present moment she is as sane as you and I are; but let her live on for another ten years or so, and she will be as mad as ever her mother was—I'll stake my professional reputation on it!"

Lady Joan put her hand to her brow as if smitten by a sudden pain there.

Gallagher, still steadily eyeing her, made a remark which seemed apropos of nothing at all. It was:

"The study of temperament and character is to me the most delightful of studies."

Lady Joan made no acknowledgement of the remark, did not so much as withdraw her hand from her eyes.

Gallagher went on:

"The temperaments of these two women, Lucy and her mother, were not, however, sufficiently complex to interest me keenly. They belong to a type with which our asylums abound, and which is the product of the union of the lymphatic with the melancholic temperament. Ah! Asylums are the places for the study of character. Temperament has to be thought of there

before any thing else, and studied under the most difficult conditions, if a cure is to be attempted. No doctor who understands his business would administer drugs, except for the alleviation of transitory symptoms."

Lady Joan withdrew her hand from her eyes. The expression on her face seemed to say: "I do not follow you; I haven't the remotest idea of your meaning; but I know it is of first importance that I should hear you out."

Gallagher resumed:

"It was hard work at times; but the skill I acquired in the discernment of character, and the discovery of motives under the most complex conditions, amply repaid me. After a time I attained a wonderful facility in following the intricacies of ill-balanced brains, and assigning a purpose to apparently purposeless actions. My lady," here he leaned forward, speaking with arrestive emphasis, "the skill I gained in the asylums I brought out of them with me; and now I defy—yes, defy—a living soul to draw my attention to an apparently motiveless action, or course of action, for which I could not in due course lay bare to view the prompting motive."

Lady Joan gave a great start. This, then, was the point to which the man had been leading her.

He gave her no time for reply, but went back suddenly to their former topic of conversation.

"All this is a digression, however, from the point we were discussing, the desirability of supplying the Lady Honor with an address to which she may send her—no doubt—effusive epistles. My lady, our course at the present moment requires to be shaped at once with courage and judgment; there must be no weak hand to guide the helm. So far things have gone well. One girl is in a convent, she is safe enough; the other girl is under my care, she is, if possible, safer still," here he gave another slight, unmirthful laugh; "but a good deal yet remains to be done which Mr. Gaskell's return might seriously interfere with. The purchase of Southmoor, for instance, is not yet complete."

Lady Joan turned and faced him with arched eyebrows.

"Who told you," she exclaimed, "that I contemplated purchasing Southmoor?"

"My lady, it so happens that I have some troublesome law business of my own on hand just now, and as Mr. McGowan is an excellent lawyer, I have commissioned

him to carry it on for me. I ventured to give your ladyship's name for a reference as to my respectability." Here Lady Joan gave a great indignant start. Her lips parted, but not a word escaped them. "It was quite casually," he went on, "through a junior clerk in the office, that I became aware that Southmoor was in the market, and that your ladyship was an intending purchaser."

The emphasis which the man laid upon the words "quite casually," suggested immediately to Lady Joan's mind the thought that his information had been obtained by artfully-contrived circuitous means. Possibly, in like manner, he had made it his business to obtain farther information respecting her private affairs.

His next remark seemed to give substance to the suspicion.

"A great deal of nonsense is current as to the secrecy which lawyers maintain concerning their clients' affairs. I suppose it is the locked-up tin boxes with which they stuff their offices that have set the idea afloat. They are as great a sham as the flung-back iron gates which some asylums affect in order to give the impression that the patients can walk out whenever they feel inclined."

Lady Joan made an uneasy movement with her hand. It was an uncomfortable thought that this man, with his keen eye for character, and avowed skill in the discovery of motive, should have perhaps wormed himself into the confidence of a junior clerk of the firm that had drawn up the will of thirty years back, which had left her sole mistress of her husband's wealth. She could feel the man's deep-seated eyes fixed full on her very eye-balls. She leaned back in her chair, saying nothing, taxing her strength to keep the turmoil in her brain from showing in her face.

He resumed :

"But all this is wide of the mark. What I most wished to impress upon your ladyship was the desirability that Mr. Gaskell's return to Longridge should not be hastened. Let the purchase of Southmoor be complete, and that farm out in Australia be bought for Ralph Harwood, and Mr. Gaskell may come back as soon as he pleases and overhaul the banker's books to his heart's content."

Lady Joan felt it was incumbent on her to speak.

"The price required for that farm seems to me altogether exorbitant," she said.

"The money produced by the sale of the Wrexford farm should go towards it."

"My lady," said Gallagher, for a moment dropping his mellifluous tone for a business-like one, "every penny that Wrexford farm fetches in the market must go into my pocket. Ralph owes me the worth of that farm over and over again; and before he sets sail for Australia, I shall expect him somehow to raise the money and pay off the thousands he has drained me of during the past few years."

Lady Joan rose to the bait at once.

"I will charge myself with those thousands," she said. "I do not wish the man's journey to Australia to be delayed."

Gallagher's accents grew mellifluous again.

"Thanks, my lady, I will, with your permission, draw up an estimate of the sums I have supplied him with from time to time. I agree with you that the sooner Ralph is shipped off the better. He is a weak, shifty sort of fellow, and completely under the thumb of his father-confessor." He broke off a moment. Then added, in a deprecating tone: "Ah, those priests, with their fingers in every pie! Don't be afraid, my lady, they're not likely, any one of them, to enter my house at Ballinacrae. I've given strict orders to my wife not to let one of them have access to Lucy."

Lady Joan grew deadly pale; her eyes drooped. She did not dare to put the question which would have come naturally enough to the lips of most people thus addressed:

"How can it possibly matter to me how many father-confessors go near this girl?"

Gallagher, leaning forward still, with his arms resting on the small table, and with eyes never once lifting from her face, went on:

"I said to my wife, 'If one of those long-coated gentlemen get at the girl and put thoughts into her head about the duty of observing the Church's ordinance of confession, how shall I be able to ask of my lady the very handsome sum she is paying me for her care and maintenance?'"

Lady Joan seemed suddenly to feel the heat of the fire. She pushed her chair sharply back from the fireplace. Yet if any one had touched her hand he would have found it cold as the snow which lay so thickly outside on the garden paths.

"Now this Father Elliot," he went on,

"who has so much influence over the girl, is a most dangerous man in this respect. You'll be glad to hear, my lady——"

Lady Joan suddenly and impetuously rose to her feet.

"One thing—one thing," she said, speaking vehemently, imperiously—"one thing, at least, I will insist on! Whatever else is done or left undone, this man—this priest shall not enter my house. I will not see him—speak to him; I will not have him brought here. Thirty years ago I said that he should go at once and for ever out of my life—he shall not be brought back into it now."

She spoke excitedly. She had evidently forgotten that she was addressing a man to whom her life of "thirty years ago" was a blank page.

He gave her one long, steady, searching look.

"Ah," he thought, "they were lovers long ago, not a doubt. This puts the matter into a nutshell, and explains why the priest was, as Ralph said, so strangely excited when he heard the lady's name."

Aloud he said, not attempting to rise, as she had risen:

"Don't be uneasy, my lady; you're not likely to be troubled with him. I was about to tell you that he left Longridge more than a week ago to join a society for African missions. They have what they call an Apostolic College at Cork. Harwood says he has volunteered for the mission to Dahomey, from which delightful bourne I should say it is extremely probable that at his age he will never return. It yearly engulfs any number of religious enthusiasts."

Lady Joan drew a long breath, and sank back in her chair.

"I can talk with you no longer to-day," she said, in a voice that sounded strained and feeble. "If you have anything of importance to say to me, come again in a day or two. But, but——"

She broke off abruptly, not daring to finish her sentence, with the words:

"But, for Heaven's sake, don't come here with no other purpose than to play with me as a cat plays with a mouse."

Gallagher rose from his chair, and bowed.

"There is one thing of first importance," he said, "to which I shall be compelled to ask for your ladyship's attention—the list of the moneys I have from time to time lent Harwood. I shall be able to make it out in a few days, and will then bring it to you."

He made one step towards the door, then came back for a last word. It was:

"I would strongly urge your ladyship to consider my suggestion as to the desirability of supplying the Lady Honor with an address to which to send her letters." Then he bowed again and was gone.

Lady Joan rose tumultuously to her feet as the door closed behind him. She pressed her icy hands to her burning temples.

"Is it worth it? Is it worth it?" she cried, passionately. "What have I done that I must be hunted, badgered, tortured, by such a creature as this?"

Conscience, with a voice like a herald's trumpet, shouted into her ear what she had done.

She covered her ears with both hands, as if to shut out a living voice.

"The end justified the means—it is a thing that one way or another has been done times without number all the world over. The strong souls, the souls who rule the world, who legislate for the good of the race, would call it a brave deed, and hail me as a benefactor. How dare——"

But here she sank back into her chair again, a sudden dizziness and faintness overcoming her, and for the moment all was oblivion to her.

Until now Lady Joan had been the high-bred lady, giving her orders to an obedient, obsequious agent. Henceforward she was to be a tool—nothing more, in the hands of a double-dyed villain.

THE BOOK OF FATE.

IN the early years of Christianity, that eager desire to look into the future, to turn over the leaves of the dread Book of Fate, which is so characteristic of human nature that it has been found to exist in every race, was satisfied to some extent by the so-called Oracles of the Sibyl. For several centuries these were modified as circumstances required, and made to suit the changing conditions of the time; but, after the collapse of the Roman empire, they fell into gradual disrepute, and their place in popular estimation was taken by the prophecies of Merlin. A cloud of fable envelopes this mysterious personage, so that it is hard to determine how far he is a reality or a myth. According to one of the numerous traditions of which he is the hero, he was the magician and counsellor of Uther Pendragon, King of the Britons,

and, by Queen Ingoma, became the father of our legendary hero, Arthur. According to another, he was ensnared by the charms of the wily enchantress, Vivien, and died, spell-bound, in a hawthorn bush. Picturesque use of this fable has been made by Spenser and Tennyson.

It seems probable that there really was a British bard of the seventh century of this name, who gained so vast a renown by his Tyrtæan strains that the other lights of the old Celtic poetry faded before his greater splendour, and eventually the various fragments of verse surviving in the national memory were all attributed to him. Even as late as the fifteenth century his wild guesses at the future—so vague in meaning and obscure in expression, that they lent themselves readily to different interpretations—were accepted throughout the West of Europe as utterances of infallible import. But their greatest vogue was in the twelfth century, when scarcely a single event took place which the credulity of the monastic chroniclers did not represent to have been foretold by the omniscient Merlin.

It is a wise maxim, never to prophesy unless you know; and probably the Merlinesque prophecies were all concocted "after the event." Sometimes, however, the same oracle received the most opposite interpretations. Thus, when King William the Lion, of Scotland, was captured by an English army, and imprisoned in Richmond Castle, Matthew Paris, the historian, informs us that the event was looked upon as fulfilling one of Merlin's prophetic deliverances—"A bit shall be thrust in his teeth, forged on the shores of the Armoric Gulf"—the Armoric Gulf being understood as referring to the Channel hereditarily owned by the Lords of Armorica or Brittany—then a province of the English throne. But some months afterwards the same prophecy was applied to Henry the Second, who, on the revolt of his sons, John and Richard, had been closely pressed by their allies, the Bretons.

The deposition of Richard the Second, and the usurpation of Henry the Fourth, are among the events which Merlin was said to have foretold, the truth being that, in those troublesome times, people invented prophecies according as they found them convenient. The curious circumstances attending the death of Henry the Fourth, of which Shakespeare has made good use, were first related by the London historian, Robert Fabian, in his "Con-

cordance of Stories." Having fallen ill, while saying his prayers at Saint Edward's shrine in Westminster Abbey, at the beginning of 1413, the King was carried into the Abbot's residence close at hand. On coming to himself, he enquired what place it was, and his attendants answered that he was lying in the Jerusalem Chamber. Then said the King: "Loving be the Father of Heaven, for now I know I shall die in this chamber, according to the prophecy of one before said that I should die in Jerusalem." This prophecy he had previously interpreted to mean that he should die in the Holy City.

In like manner Pope Sylvester the Second, having made a brazen head—like Roger Bacon's—obtained from it the information that he would not die before he had chanted mass in Jerusalem. One day, while celebrating mass in a church at Rome, he was overtaken by a serious illness, and, on making enquiry, found that the church was named Jerusalem. Of course, the oracle of the brazen head was duly fulfilled.

Of this juggling kind of prophecy there are other instances. One of the Earls of Pembroke, having been told he would die at Warwick, obtained the governorship of Berwick-upon-Tweed, which certainly lay at a considerable distance from the old Midland city. But when he was killed in a fight with the Scots, it was discovered that Barwick, as it was then pronounced, was obviously the place intended by the prophet. Cardinal Wolsey had been warned to beware of Kingston, and was specially careful never to enter the town so named; but this did not prevent him, when his fall occurred, from being arrested by Sir Walter Kingston. Margery Jourdain, or Jourdenemyne, the witch of Ely, is said to have informed Edward, Duke of Somerset, that he would be defeated and slain at a castle:

Let him shun castles;
Safer shall he be on the sandy plain
Than where castles mounted stand.

He fell in the first battle of St. Alban's, and his dead body was found

Underneath an ale-house' paltry sign—
"The Castle."

Lastly, William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk (temp. Henry the Sixth), was warned by a wizard to beware of Water, and avoid the Tower. So that when his enemies prevailed against him, he hastened from London and its Tower, with the view of escaping to France. On his passage across

the Channel, he was captured by the King's ship, "Nicholas of the Tower," commanded by a man named Walter Whitmore. The dramatist makes the unfortunate Duke exclaim :

Thy name affrights me, in whose sound is death.
A cunning man did calculate my birth,
And told me that by water I should die ;
Yet let not this make thee be bloody-minded,
Thy name is Gualtier, being rightly sounded.

However, Suffolk was straightway beheaded, and the quibbling prediction fulfilled.

In the sixteenth century, to Merlin's place succeeded Michel Nostradamus, a Provençal physician, who died in 1566. He seems to have been a man of considerable scholarship, and he attained a wide reputation for medical skill. Having settled in the town of Salon, he studied astrology in order to extend his powers in curing man's diseases, and was thus led to practise the seer's craft, beginning in the modest character of an almanack-maker. His earliest "guesses" were published in 1555—written in mystical and exceedingly figurative quatrains—and at once became so popular that King Henry the Second (of France) summoned him to Paris, and consulted him about his children's future. Charles the Ninth, and his mother, the infamous Catherine de Medici, also consulted him, and rewarded him, each with a handsome sum in gold crowns, while the King appointed him his physician. He died at Salon, aged sixty-three. "I am," he says, in the introduction to his prophecies, in which, it appears, he himself implicitly believed, "but a mortal man, and the greatest sinner in the world ; but being surprised occasionally by a prophetic mood, and long calculations pleasing myself in my study, I have made several books of predictions, each one containing a hundred astronomical stanzas."

A man who delivers himself of some hundreds of prophecies, is almost sure to make one or two lucky hits ; that is, by the law of coincidences, certain events may be expected to occur, which will bear a resemblance, more or less vague, to his guesses, or inventions. Thus, the credulous may easily trace a forecast of the Fire of London, preceded by the execution of Charles the First, in the following shadowy verse :

Le sang de juste à Londres sera faute,
Brûlez par feu, de vingt et trois, les six,
La dame antique cherra de place haute
De même sorte plusieurs seront occis.

The blood of the just shall be wanting

in London, burnt by fire of three-and-twenty, the six—which is near enough, I suppose, for 1666 ;—the ancient dame—Monarchy ?—shall fall from her high place, of the same sect many shall be killed.

In another quotation we meet with the line, "Le Senat de Londres metteront à mort le Roy," which certainly does appear a pretty good guess at Charles the First's execution ; and the victories of Cromwell's Ironsides at Dunkirk may be assumed as foreshadowed in the line, "Le Oliver se plantera en terra firma." But our sporting prophets in the columns of the daily and weekly press are quite as often successful as was this Provençal seer ; and on the whole he fairly merited the punning epitaph of the poet Jodelle :

Nostra damus cum falsa damus, nam fallere nostrum est,
Et cum falsa damus, nil nisi Nostra damus.

That is : "We give our own things when we give false things, for it is our habit to deceive ; and when we give false things we are giving only our own."

The son of Nostradamus also tried his hand at soothsaying, but with unpleasant consequences. When the Catholic army, in 1574, was besieging the town of Pouzin, in Languedoc, Saint Luc, its commander, enquired of young Nostradamus what would be the result. After reflecting profoundly, the prophet replied that the town would perish by fire ; and to prove the truth of his prediction, was found, when the town was taken and plundered, setting fire to it in several places. Next day, when Saint Luc met him, he said : "Come now, Master Prophet, can you tell if any accident will befall you to-day?" And on Nostradamus confidently replying "None," he struck him in the stomach with his stick, and so startled the horse which Nostradamus was riding, that he reared, threw his rider, and dealt him a mortal blow with his hoof.

When our King John Lackland was at war with his barons, there was a Yorkshire hermit, named Peter, who enjoyed a great reputation for wisdom, because he had several times foretold the "coming events." Among other things revealed to him about King John by the spirit of prophecy, he affirmed and publicly declared before all who were willing to listen, that he would not be King of England after next Ascension Day ; but on that day the Crown would be transferred to another. The King, informed of this highly treasonable "guess," sent for its author.

"Shall I die, then, on the day you name? Or by what other means shall I lose my Crown?"

The hermit replied: "Know for certain that on the day I have said you will no longer be King; and if I am convicted of lying, do with me what you will."

"I take you at your word," said John; and he placed him in the custody of William of Harcourt, who shut him up in Corfe Castle.

Close guarded, and loaded with irons, the hermit awaited the issue. His prophecy had spread on the wings of rumour all over the country, and was everywhere accepted as if it had been a voice from Heaven. Ascension Day came, Ascension Day went, and John was still King of England. Then he caused the unfortunate hermit to be tied to the tail of a horse, and dragged through the streets of Wareham, after which he was hung, together with his sons, with every circumstance of ignominy.

Some of the most curious of the mediæval predictions are those which dealt with the destinies of certain States; and of these the most interesting relate to the history of Constantinople. They show at how early a period the Greeks were apprehensive of the coming downfall of their empire, pressed as it was on every side by Arabs, Bulgarians, Russians, and finally by the Turks.

Ralph de Diceto, one of our early Anglo-Norman chroniclers, whose history does not extend beyond 1199, asserts that on the famous Golden Gate of Constantinople, through which victorious generals led their triumphal processions, was inscribed the following prediction:

When the Fair King shall come from the West,
I shall open of my own will.

It was not through this gate, however, that the Crusaders entered in 1204, for in order to baffle the prophecies concerning it, the Byzantine princes had ordered it to be walled up. It is a remarkable fact that even to this day the Turks accept the tradition which so alarmed the Greeks; they firmly believe that the Golden Gate will, at some future time, open to admit the Christians, who, they are persuaded, will ultimately reconquer the beautiful city of the Bosphorus.

Here is another fanciful story:

On the forum of Taurus, or the Bull, stood a colossal equestrian statue, a masterpiece of art, which passed in the vulgar opinion for Joshua, with hand extended,

staying the course of the descending sun; but by classic scholars was declared to be Bellerophon and his winged horse, Pegasus; and the free attitude of the latter seemed to mark that he trod on air rather than on earth. Nicetas, a contemporary historian, asserts that, according to an old tradition, under the left fore-foot of the horse was hidden the figure of a man, representing a Venetian, a Bulgarian, or some other Western enemy of the Roman name. So much pains, however, had been taken to render this foot firm and solid, that it was impossible to put the truth of this tradition to the test. But when, after the capture of Constantinople, the horse and its rider were broken in pieces, and sent to be melted down, the figure was discovered—the Latins, however, caring nothing for the traditions attached to it, cast it into the flames with the rest.

It is said that the Emperor Michel Paleologus, tormented by his conscience for the crimes he had committed in order to gratify his ambition, and fearing that the Imperial crown would not descend to his family, consulted his soothsayers whether his son would enjoy it after his death. The oracle replied, "Mancaimi," which seemed incomprehensible. But the soothsayers explained it to mean that the empire would be possessed by as many of his descendants as there were letters in this barbarous word, and by no more. The course of events proved the truth of their explanation.

Finally, a remarkable prophecy concerning the Imperial City of the East is recorded by a Georgian writer—probably of the eighteenth century—whose political sagacity made a bold leap into the future. He pretends that, on the tomb of Constantine the Great, were engraved these words: "Many nations shall unite upon the Black Sea and the continent; the Ishmaelites shall be conquered, and the power of their nation extinguished. The combined peoples of Russia and the adjacent territories shall take possession of the Seven Hills and the country round about."

I have neither the space nor the inclination to enumerate all the predictions which the perverted ingenuity of fanatics has wrested out of the Apocalyptic visions; nor to repeat the names of all the personages to whom they have been applied. How many times has the Number of the Beast—666—been differently rendered? Among others, it has been identified with

Trajan, Diocletian, Mahomet, Julian the Apostate, with more than one of the Popes, Luther, Calvin, and, more recently, Napoleon Bonaparte. I remember to have seen it fixed, in an advertisement in a London paper, upon Napoleon the Third.

The futility of political prophecies has been demonstrated in our own time; and I shall pass on, therefore, to some illustrations of the guesses at the approaching end of the world which formerly terrified mankind. They began, indeed, in the earliest years of Christianity, through a misinterpretation of the words of its Founder; but as generation succeeded generation, and yet the dreaded cataclysm did not take place, men's minds recovered their tranquillity. After the irruptions of the Barbarians, however, when the mighty fabric of the Roman Empire fell with a crash that resounded throughout Christendom, their fears revived; and every tempest, every earthquake, every unusual celestial appearance, was regarded as a portent of the Day of Judgement. In the fourth century, Hesychius, Bishop of Sadona, wrote to Saint Augustine to enquire if it were true that the end of the world was at hand? "No," said the great Bishop of Hippo, "that cannot be, for it is written that the Gospel shall be preached everywhere before that event arrives."

Year after year, the catastrophe was postponed, until, in the latter part of the ninth century, men once more fell into mortal terror, the year 1000 being definitely assigned as the utmost limit of the world's existence.

"It was a time," says Canon Robertson, "of gloomy apprehensions. The approach of the thousandth year from the Saviour's birth had raised a general belief that the Second Advent was at hand; and, in truth, there was much which might easily be construed as fulfilling the predicted signs of the end—wars and rumours of wars, famines and pestilences, fearful appearances in the heavens, faith passing from the earth and love waning cold. The preamble, 'Whereas the end of the world draweth near,' which had been common in donations to churches or monasteries, now assumed a new and more urgent significance; and the belief that the long expectation was at length to be accomplished, did much to revive the power and wealth of the clergy. The minds of men were called away from the ordinary cares and employments of life; even our knowledge of history has suffered in con-

sequence, since there was little inclination to bestow labour on the chronicling of events, when no posterity was expected to read the records. Some plunged into desperate recklessness of living; an eclipse of the sun or the moon was the signal for multitudes to seek a hiding-place in dens and caves of the earth; and crowds of pilgrims flocked to Palestine, where the Saviour was expected to appear for judgement."

But the year 1000 passed away without any catastrophe, and the world again breathed freely. Thenceforward a belief in the Second Advent reappeared only at rare intervals and among a limited number of persons.

Astrologers, however, have more than once struck a panic to the hearts of men by their frightful predictions. In 1521 a general alarm prevailed, owing to a prediction of Johann Stöffler, a celebrated German magician, who had announced a great deluge for the month of February in that year. The alarm spread from Germany into France, and from France into Italy, and over the rest of Europe. The distinguished Italian philosopher, Augustine Niso, endeavoured, but in vain, to allay it by his book, "*De Falsa Diluvii Prognosticatione*" (On the False Prophecy of a Deluge).

The veteran General, Guy Rangon, fearing that Niso's arguments might produce an impression on the mind of Charles the Fifth, engaged Thomas, an eminent physician of Ravenna, to refute the philosopher and persuade the Emperor to provide for his own safety, besides sending commissioners into every province to survey the ground and point out to the inhabitants the places where they and their cattle would be least exposed to the anticipated floods!

Zadkiel, I believe, fills his almanack yearly with forecasts of appalling disasters; but he is a prophet who is not honoured in his own country, and his vaticinations frighten nobody.

The legendary prediction concerning Easter, that

When my lord falls in my lady's lap,
Let England beware of some mishap;

that is, when the Easter festival falls near to Lady Day, has given rise to some strange coincidences. In 1818, Easter Day happened on the twenty-second of March, and in the following November died Queen Charlotte; in 1826, it fell on the twenty-sixth, and the year was saddened by widespread and alarming commercial disaster.

The credulity of the human mind was prettily illustrated by the world of fashion, in 1750. A smart shock of earthquake had startled all England in February; and was succeeded by a more violent one in the following March. The consternation was general, and bishops and clergymen made the event the subject of numerous sermons, homilies, and exhortations; while it is on record that a country quack reaped a golden harvest by selling earthquake pills. Then arose a crazy-minded life-guardsman, solemnly predicting that a third and specially fatal shock would occur on April the fifth. The polite world—as it is called—took fright; and on the evening preceding the fatal day, the roads out of London, which the earthquake was to tumble into ruins, were thronged with vehicles, though the newspapers threatened to publish “an exact list of all the nobility and gentry who have left, or shall leave this place through fear of another earthquake.” The ladies wrapped themselves in “earthquake gowns”—warm gowns intended to be worn while sitting out of doors all night. Not a few persons spent the night in Hyde Park, sitting in their coaches, and playing cards by the light of wax candles. “What will you think,” writes Horace Walpole, “of Lady Catherine Pelham, Lady Frances Arundel, and Lord and Lady Galway, who goes this evening to an inn ten miles out of town, where they are to play brag till four o’clock in the morning, and then come back, I suppose, to look for the bones of their husbands and families under the rubbish?”

Some predictions, by the mental anxiety they occasion, work out their own fulfillments. When Peter and John de Carvajal had been found guilty of murder, on most inadequate evidence, and sentenced to be thrown from the summit of a rock, Ferdinand the Fourth, who was then King of Spain (1362), could not be induced to pardon them. As they were led to execution, they called upon God to witness their innocence, and appealed to His tribunal, before which they summoned the King to appear in thirty days’ time. Ferdinand laughed at the summons; but some days afterwards fell sick, and retired to his country palace to recover his health and divert his mind, hoping to shake off the remembrance of the summons, which troubled him in spite of his laughter. On the thirtieth day he seemed better, and was very merry and cheerful, ridiculing the uneasiness he had experienced; he retired to

rest as usual, but was found dead in his bed the next morning.

Similar incidents have occurred in history, and dramatist and poet have made effective use of them.

The alleged prophecy of George Wishart, the Scottish martyr, respecting the death of Cardinal Beaton, may be classed among these remarkable coincidences. Through the unrelenting severity of the Cardinal, Wishart was condemned to be burnt as a heretic, in front of the Castle of Saint Andrew’s, on the first of March, 1546. As he proceeded to the place of execution, he saw his persecutor sitting in a balcony, to watch the sufferings of his victim, and, as if suddenly inspired, called upon him to appear before the Divine Tribunal within sixty days. It so happened, that on the twenty-ninth of May following, the great Churchman was assassinated by John Lister, James Melville, and Carmichael. “Repent thee,” cried Melville, “of thy former wicked life, but especially of the shedding of the blood of that instrument of God, Mr. George Wishart, which, albeit the flames of fire consumed before noon, yet cries it with a vengeance upon thee; and we from God are sent to revenge it. I protest that, neither the hatred of thy person, the love of thy riches, or the fear of any trouble thou couldst have done to me in particular, moved or move me to strike thee, but only because thou hast been, and remainest, an obstinate enemy to Christ Jesus and his holy Evangel.” And so he struck him twice or thrice through with a sword, and he fell, shrieking miserably: “I am a priest! I am a priest! Fie! fie! All is gone!” As soon as he was dead, his murderers took his body and hung it over the castle wall by one arm and by one foot, for all the people to gaze at. But it is right to say that some doubt attaches to the authenticity of this story.

A NIGHT FÊTE AT RICHMOND.

SOMETIMES we may regret that the old life and gaiety of the Thames about London has passed away, and that the stream from Putney to London Bridge is, except for coal barges and an occasional river steamer, left pretty much to itself. No more joyous fêtes about Whitehall, with gay wherries and barges almost hiding the waters beneath; no more festive processions to Ranelagh or Vauxhall, with concerts on

the water, and Royalty joining in the frolic, and half the population of London afloat on the tide. But the scene is changed, that is all. The gaiety and brightness of the river are further to seek; but we shall find them up-stream, where a gleam of sunny weather brings out a swarm of pleasure craft, and a soft, warm, summer's night reveals a galaxy of fairy lights that gleam from rows of house-boats, and glow from tents and encampments about every quiet reach of the river. Then some riverside regatta brings together a whole host of the wandering denizens of stream and back-water, and if summer proves a reality, and not a damp and dripping fraud, happy are the halcyon evenings that follow the bustle and display of the day, the banging of starting guns, and the cheers of the sympathetic spectators. Henley, of course, is the crown and flower of the river season, and it is curious to witness the general movement and congress of everything and everybody afloat; a stir that is felt as high up the river as Lechlade, and as low down as Kew, as the great function of the year approaches.

But of all bright scenes upon the river, commend us to the Richmond feast of lanterns, a fête which originated last year, and which bids fair to become the most popular and brilliant of all the celebrations that Father Thames has ever had to record. It is a moveable feast, of course, for Richmond is very much dependent for its supply of river upon moons and tides. Long and bravely has Richmond struggled to secure a perpetual head of water in its charming reaches. A weir and lock below the town, somewhere about Isleworth, would, say the Richmond people, greatly improve the beauty of the river and its conveniences for boating purposes. For now, when the tide is low, it often happens that the river is almost run dry, and shining Thames is represented by banks of shining mud. But so far, the general desire of the neighbourhood has been thwarted by the conservancy of the "Conservators," and the opposition of the interests concerned in the not very important commercial navigation of the river, which, above Richmond, is represented by a few strings of coal barges and an occasional boat-load of bricks. And this is not entirely a matter of merely local concern; for all the English-speaking world has a kind of vested interest in Richmond, with its landscapes of unsurpassable rich-

ness and beauty, so that anything that adds to the charms and convenience of the river, is so much placed to the general stock of joy and delight in which all the world is welcome to share.

Yet things being as they are, Richmond makes the best of them; and with a fine night and an evening tide, that best leaves little to be desired. The tide can be calculated upon, but for the fine night we must trust to Providence. With the sight of gay boating costumes, and gorgeous blazers, accompanied by waterproofs, great-coats, and umbrellas, setting in towards eventide in the direction of the railway stations that are in communication with Richmond, it may be inferred that the weather, if not all that could be desired, is not without some hopeful characteristics. Steamers, too, are under weigh, and calling at all the piers; not the small fry of the ordinary service, but big saloon boats, rigged out with awnings and colours, and hung with lamps from stem to stern. All Richmond is astir, and the note of preparation is everywhere heard along the riverside. If you have a boat it is a point of honour that your craft shall be caparisoned with lamps and gaily-coloured lanterns; or, if you are a boatless personage, there are plenty to be hired with less elaborate arrangements in the way of paper lanterns and farthing candles. Just now on the terrace a band is playing gay waltzes and soft serenades, and the music, mellowed by distance, falls gently upon the ear from among the tufted trees. It is a pious observance that one should never fail to visit that beautiful terrace on the hill, consecrated by so many memories, and with that view of curving river and rich wooded vale and plain, of which the charm can never tire.

In other days there was the long tramp up the steep and dusty highway to be encountered. But now there is a pleasanter way through the new public gardens, new in the sense of their appropriation to the public, but shaded by ancestral trees, and with turf and foliage that have all the velvet softness that accompanies long possession. But now, instead of being the guests of the Duke of Buccleugh, whose lordly pleasure the place had so long been, we are under the care of the borough of Richmond—of the borough, mark you, no longer village or hamlet, but borough municipal, the very youngest of all the boroughs, with a Charter granted, not by John, or Edward,

or Henry, but under the sign-manual of Victoria.

Now we may mount the hill by pleasant shaded walks, as a bird of the night trills sweetly among the trees. The calm and twilight gloom contrasts pleasantly with the sparkling lamps, and the movement of gathering crowds below; and is in full harmony with lights shining softly through the trees, and music sounding from the heights, and the lovelorn song of the bird from the gloomy thicket.

Upon the terrace, the last loyal notes of the band are dying away, and the bandmen are packing up their instruments, while far below, the river, reflecting the dying light of day, begins to sparkle here and there, and glow with Jack o' Lantern fires. But a great screen of foliage shuts out all view of the gay doings of the town below, and so, following the general movement in the direction of the river, we leave the well-known hill to solitude and the shades of night.

From Richmond Bridge the view is pretty, strange, and fantastic. As daylight fades, innumerable lights appear, and all along the river front the sloping lawns and shaded terraces are putting on a bright apparel—here a fringe of softly glowing oil lamps, and there a festoon of Chinese lanterns, of varied hues. And a flotilla of small boats dart like fireflies here and there, their fantastic lights reflected in a myriad glittering points from the dark stream. Then there are barges anchored here and there, decked in rising tiers of coloured lights. As the tide comes freshly in, with spangled lines of ripples fringed with foam, great argosies arrive from London town, big steamers hung with lights, and, chief of all, the "Cardinal Wolsey," a mass of coloured fires, whistling its way through the crowd of tender craft.

Send for the shade of Alexander Pope to fitly chronicle the scene; or for John Gay, with his light touch; or for the more solemn, ancient ghost of Philip Sidney, who also loved the river well.

Oh, happy Thames that did my Stella bear!

I saw thyself, with many a smiling line,

Upon thy cheerful face Joy's livery wear,

While those fair planets on the stream did shine.

But looking down the river where the creek by the eyot is lined with glittering craft, which steal forth one by one to join the concourse above bridge, one sees a kind of rustic fair going on by the riverside. And below that, where the lights die away one by one, lies the quiet, shaded nook,

apart from all the festive glitter, which, somehow, seems haunted by the shades of Plantagenets and Tudors who came here to die within sound of the rippling river.

A gun announces that something is going to begin, and by this time everything is lighted up, and the scene, all framed in dark woodlands, is as brilliant and fairy-like as can be imagined. Higher up, where the river bends towards Marble Hill, the banks of the stream are festooned with lights and with sparkling devices; and between this glittering arcade a fairy fleet comes paddling down; while from somewhere on the water a full band discourses sweet music to the wondering naiads. Here is a full-rigged ship, whose ropes and spars are indicated by coloured lights; or, again, we have a bower, all glittering with lamps, or a fairy barge, hung round with dainty devices. The favourite skiffs are received with cheers and murmurs of applause, for the banks are lined with a solid crowd of people, who have been pouring in ever since it was seen that a definite downpour was not likely to mar the fête. The footway on the Richmond side is about as full as it will hold, but occupied by a good-tempered, orderly crowd, with whole families of children, and with babes in arms sleeping comfortably through the whole display; but there is one fractious infant, of a few months old, whose mother threatens it with never bringing it out again if it is not good directly. Over on the tow-path, too, on the Middlesex side, there is a compact phalanx of spectators, for the most part invisible in the gloom, but revealed with strange, lurid distinctness, dark forms, and rows of white faces, when some coloured fire sheds a sudden radiance over the scene.

Up goes the first rocket, and dissolves into fiery particles high overhead; while golden reflections from the river seem to rise to meet the descending shower. And then a brilliant display of fireworks goes on, with accessories of floating fire-fountains and fiery serpents hissing along the surface of the water, till the eyes are too much dazzled to take in anything but a general sense of fire, and flame, and smoke. And we have fire-balloons, with trains of brilliant coruscations, that cast a strange glow upon the upturned faces of the thousands who line the river-bank.

The fireworks are still spluttering and blazing, when one display is ended, and

another breaks out in a different place ; when the consideration suddenly presents itself, that all these thousands, or most of them, have to get home to-night ; when the exodus fairly begins, what a crush there will be for the trains ! So we take time by the forelock. The same idea seems to occur to multitudes of people simultaneously, and the roads leading from the river, just now all but deserted, are full of people hastening to the railway-stations. Carriages stop the way, horses rear and fidget as bombs and grenades explode with resonant reports. Well, adieu, fair Richmond ; and many thanks for your famous feast of lanterns.

THE "MIGNONETTE."

A COMPLETE STORY.

To spend your summer holiday in, there is no place like a house-boat. If you have not tried one, do. I have.

Faulkner—Reggie Faulkner—came into the office to me one day, and said :

"Lane, where are you going to spend your holiday ?"

I did not know. I told him so.

"Then you're the very man I want. And I have the very thing you want."

I asked him what that was.

"The 'Mignonette,'" he said.

"The 'Mignonette!' What's that ?"

"What's that ! Why, it's a house-boat. Fancy asking what that is. There is scarcely a man between Putney and Oxford who doesn't know the 'Mignonette.'"

I confess I was not greatly impressed. Nor did I see that the "Mignonette" was just the thing I wanted. But Faulkner is such an eloquent man.

"House-boats are all the rage. Every one has a house-boat."

I did not see that that was an attraction ; but I did not tell him so.

"If the thing goes much farther, both banks will be lined with them, from the mouth of the river to the source. They're splendid fun. If you're fond of boating—"

"But I'm not fond of boating," I suggested, mildly. "I don't mind, on a fine day, sitting in a boat and messing about with the oars—with the stream. But playing the amateur galley-slave I leave to other men."

"That's what you say. But wait till you find yourself in a boat, and then you'll show us how it's done. Why, you're just the build for an oarsman."

I felt, nay, I knew, that this was an outrage upon truth. I am short, and full in the waist. If that is just the build for an oarsman, then I have still some things to learn. Yet his eloquence prevailed. I allowed him to persuade me that the "Mignonette" was just the thing I wanted. It was to be had for a song—forty pounds for a month. I did not see that that was much of a song ; but he assured me that it was.

"In August, sir ; the month of the year. And furnished—plate and all—down to the linen. And such a boat ! and only done up the other day. It is the cheapest thing upon the river."

There were to be four of us : Faulkner and I, and two other men. I asked him who the two other men were to be.

"They'll be all right," he assured me.

"Trust me. I'll get two of the jolliest fellows going."

I trusted him. We were to share expenses. They also, Faulkner declared, would be a song. But I had an intuitive suspicion that he had his idea of songs, and I had mine.

My holiday began on the Wednesday following. In the interim Faulkner was to arrange all details, and on the Wednesday morning we were to go down together from Paddington. By the first post on the Wednesday there came a note from Faulkner. It seemed that he was detained in town, but I was to go down by the train agreed upon, and he was to follow with the other two men later in the day. On no account was I to delay my departure. Everything on board the "Mignonette" was in apple-pie order, and if no one put in an appearance at the time agreed upon, they—he did not say who—but they would think there was something wrong. My first impulse was to let them think. It was cool of Faulkner to leave me in the lurch like that. I had half a mind to pack my trunks and start at once—for Norway, say. But second thoughts prevailed. I was to book for a Berkshire station, and, on arrival, I was to enquire for the "Mignonette." Any one would tell me where it was.

I followed my part of the programme to the letter. I booked to the Berkshire station, and I enquired for the "Mignonette ;" but no one could tell me where it was. The more enquiries I made, the less information I obtained. One thing I did learn, and that was, how wanting was my knowledge of the geography—and of

the railway systems—of my native land. It was only on my arrival that I became aware—Faulkner had not hinted at such a thing, perhaps he thought I knew—that that Berkshire station was, some said three, some said four, some said five miles distant from the riverside. I chartered a fly; the driver solemnly assured me that the river was nearly six miles off. When I arrived at the stream—it seemed a very short six miles, I must allow, unless the horse went very fast, which, as it only had three sound legs to go upon, I scarcely think it did—no one knew anything about the "Mignonette." I was beginning to wonder if Faulkner had been having a joke with me—the thing was scarcely credible, yet I had some acquaintance with his character, and he might have been—and I was just going to instruct the flyman to drive me back that phenomenally short six miles of his, at the rate of a shilling a mile, and something for the driver—with a view of inflicting on Faulkner some severe bodily injury on my return to town, when help arrived. It came in the shape of a small boy. There was a house-boat moored off Mr. Coningham's fields. He had seen it there that morning.

"What's its name?"

Small boy didn't know. It was a house-boat—that was all he knew. To him, apparently, all house-boats were the same.

On this meagre information I ventured to act. I dismissed the flyman—in whose mind, all at once, the six miles seemed to have swollen into seven—and saddled the boy with my Gladstone bag. He went in search of the house-boat he had seen.

It was the "Mignonette." There was the name, painted in letters so large that he who ran might read. It was moored close into the bank. I paid the boy, and went on board. From what Faulkner had said in his note I supposed that I should find somebody awaiting my arrival. But that was a mistake of Faulkner's, and not his first, nor his last, by any means. The boat was quite deserted.

I had never been on board a house-boat before. I was at once struck by the fact that the "Mignonette" offered scanty accommodation for four grown-up persons. There was but one apartment, and that was certainly no larger than a state-room on board a liner. Behind it was a sort of cupboard, which was apparently intended to serve as a kitchen, for it contained a stove, and some pots and pans. Possibly my little adventures in search of the

"Mignonette" had given my mind a jaundiced tinge; but certainly, the idea of four men living, eating, drinking, sleeping, "cribbed, cabined, confined," for four weeks, during the hottest season of the year, in such a "parlour," the thought was horrible.

There was another thing. Faulkner had mentioned—as a recommendation—that the "Mignonette" had just been done up. It had so recently that it reeked of paint. If there is one thing to which I do object, it is the smell of paint. I merely mention this to show how brightly things were promising. Faulkner had also mentioned that the "Mignonette" was furnished—down to the plate and linen. I did not go then into questions of plate and linen; but so far as I could discover there was a camp-stool on board, and a deck-chair, which required mending. There was no table, nor did I see where they could put it if there had been. Certainly not in the cabin—or whatever they called the solitary apartment—unless we were to keep outside. A cursory examination induced me to believe that that camp-stool, and that deck-chair, which required mending, was all the furniture the "Mignonette" contained. If the presence of those two articles realised Faulkner's ideas of "furnished," then I felt that his ideas were vague.

One more point. Faulkner had mentioned—always in his note—that I should find everything in apple-pie order. Among other things I expected to find was something to eat. He had undertaken to see to all the details. Considering that we had arranged to stay for a month on board, one would have supposed that such an item as provisions would have come among the details. But, if the "naked eye" could be trusted, assisted by an enquiring pair of hands, this was a delusion of mine. I had to begin my month's sojourn on board the "Mignonette" by tramping back to the village—a better six miles than the flyman's—in search of food. I found it at the inn. It took the shape of cold beef and pickles. On the bill this repast figured as "Luncheon, three-and-sixpence." I could have had the same quantity and quality of provisions, at a City luncheon bar, for sixpence. Even then I doubt if I should not have preferred my sixpence.

After "luncheon," I walked back to the "Mignonette"—I am not fond of walking, but that is by the way. When I reached it, I perceived an old gentleman was standing on the bank. He eyed me, as I

thought, rather aggressively, as I boarded the craft—I am not sure if a house-boat is a "craft," but my knowledge of nautical terms is not to be relied on. Directly I was on board, he—well, shouted at me, is the only expression I can use.

"You, sir!"

I turned, and looked at him. He was a tall old gentleman, about fifty-five years old—with, I should judge, a temper somewhat older. Something seemed to have displeased him.

"I beg your pardon—did you speak to me?"

My enquiry was at least a courteous one, which his reply was not.

"Confound your impudence!" I put up my eye-glass. I thought the man was mad. "What the something are you doing there?"

"I am afraid I don't understand you."

I didn't.

"Oh, yes you do, you Cockney tailor."

He looked a gentleman. I felt that no gentleman would use such language towards a perfect stranger without having some shadow of reason on his side.

"May I ask, sir, what it is that I have done?"

"You know well enough. If you don't clear out of that within an hour, I'll cut you loose."

He shook his stick at me, and went striding off at a good four miles an hour. What he meant I had not the least idea. Who he was I didn't know from Adam. A horrible fear came over me. Had I blundered on somebody else's house-boat by mistake? There might be a dozen "Mignonettes," or a hundred, for all I knew. Certainly that particular "Mignonette" fell very short of the picture which Faulkner's eloquence had suggested to my imagination. I felt that discretion was the better part of valour, and that it would be advisable to leave it before I was turned out by force, and taken up for trespassing, or burglary, or something. In that case, it would be prudent to return to the station and await Faulkner's appearance on the scene, so that I might learn from his own lips where I was to spend my holiday.

The only reason which deterred me from pursuing such a course was a simple one: I couldn't. I had already, I reckoned, walked twelve miles. On the top of those twelve miles the prospect of another pedestrian feat was more than I could stomach. Better wait where I was, trusting to the soothing

effects of well-worded explanations when the moment of trial came. I waited. While I waited I fell asleep. I was roused from slumber by a hand being laid on my shoulder, and a familiar voice sounding in my ears:

"Holloa, old chap, haven't you got dinner ready?"

I looked up. There was Faulkner standing by my side. With him were two men. One was a stranger to me; the other was Philip Aitken: the only man with whom I am not on good terms in all this wide, wide world.

"Dinner!" I stammered.

The sudden sight of Aitken had made me feel quite queer. I had refused countless invitations to avoid running the risk of having to meet that man.

"Yes, dinner. Do you know what time it is? It's nearly eight o'clock."

"Nearly eight o'clock!"

I had been asleep four hours.

"We're starving."

"But dinner? I don't understand you, Faulkner. How was I to get your dinner when there was nothing to eat for miles?"

"Nothing to eat for miles! You don't mean to say that you have got us nothing to eat?" I suppose my face was a sufficient answer. He went on: "Why, I told you in my note to get something for dinner."

"Excuse me; but you did nothing of the kind."

He protested that he had. It was only when I showed him his own note that he discovered that he had intended to tell me, but had stopped short at the intention.

"Well, this is a go!" he said.

I felt, myself, that the position was a pleasant one. I drew him aside.

"What is that man doing here?" I asked.

He glanced over his shoulder.

"What man? Aitken? That's one of the fellows I told you about. Let me introduce you to him."

"Thank you. Spare yourself the trouble. I know him; or, at least I did—once. Do I understand that Mr. Aitken is going to spend four weeks with me on board the 'Mignonette'?"

"Of course he is. What's the matter with you, man?"

I did not tell him; at least, not then. The situation might have its comic side; but it was all tragedy to me. To think of all I had done to avoid encountering that man, and yet I had condemned myself to spend my summer holiday with him, shut up in a cabin twelve feet square!

"I suppose this is the 'Mignonette'?" I hazarded a moment after.

"Of course it is the 'Mignonette,' Lane, old boy, don't you feel well?"

"I only asked the question because an old gentleman has been conducting himself in a fashion which is, perhaps, peculiar to the natives of these parts. He seemed to more than think that I had no right on board."

"Some old lunatic, I suppose. But, I say, this question of food is serious. I've had nothing to eat all day; I'm starving."

The stranger spoke:

"Let us draw lots, and he on whom the lot shall fall shall be killed, and cooked, and consumed for the benefit of his fellows."

When the man said that, I knew, from the way in which he said it, that he was a funny man. That was the final straw. The sooner I fell overboard the better. Faulkner seemed to think that the man was humorous.

"None of your jokes, Beadle!" Beadle! What a name! "The thing's too serious. I told Metcalf to see that the 'Mignonette' was moored in a nice, quiet part of the stream—I know that you like quietude, Lane—and he has. But too much quietude has its drawbacks, don't you know?"

We were relieved from the food difficulty in an unexpected way. While we were debating the advisability of tramping back to the village, and adjourning to the inn for the night, we were hailed from the river. A boat was approaching us, with four men on board. Faulkner seemed to know them.

"Hulloa, Metcalf!" he cried. "Here's a pretty go! We're starving, and there's nothing to eat in the place."

"That's all right," rejoined some one in the boat—who I afterwards learned was Metcalf—"we've come to dine."

"No! Not really?"

"Really. We've brought our dinner with us, too." They had. Sorrow was turned into joy. "We thought you'd be a bit short, as this was your first night in quarters—fellows always do begin with a muddle—so we've brought enough to feed an army."

We had a sumptuous meal on the roof of the cabin. I don't enjoy picnics as a rule, but I did that one—thoroughly. Before we had finished, "the shades of night were falling fast."

"Let's light up downstairs and have a hand at nap," suggested Metcalf.

The suggestion was the cause of a discovery. There was a lamp in the cabin—but no oil.

"You're supposed to supply your own oil," said Metcalf.

It was as well to learn it—then. Faulkner ought to have been aware of it before.

"No one got a candle?" No one had. "Then it will be a case of early to bed, my boys. Unless you care to come back with us, and allow us to provide you with light, as well as food."

We thought it would be better, on the whole, to decline their invitation. Metcalf and his friends got into their boat, and pulled off through the gathering gloom. When they had got clear of us, they stopped.

"I say, Faulkner," sang out Metcalf, "I think I'd better mention it. I don't know if you're aware that you are trespassing?"

"Trespassing? No! What do you mean?"

"You told me to see that the 'Mignonette' was moored in a quiet place, and I saw she was. You're moored off Coningham's meadow."

"Well, what then?"

"Nothing; only Coningham is a riparian owner, and objects to the presence of house-boats on his land. If he discovers you in the middle of the night he'll cut you loose. Ta-ta, dear boys; the stream runs our way. See you in the morning."

And Metcalf went off through the night.

"I suppose that was Coningham who slanged me," I remarked, when Faulkner had partially exhausted his vocabulary of bad language. "He said he would cut us loose. I didn't understand his meaning then. I understand it better now."

Faulkner went off again at this. All I cared for was to turn in. I hadn't felt so tired for years. I mentioned this to Faulkner. His rejoinder startled me:

"I suppose you saw that there were beds on board?"

"You suppose I saw there were beds on board? Faulkner, I don't understand you. What have I to do with all these things? You said that you would see to the details."

"So I did. I told Metcalf to see that things were right."

"You call that seeing to the details? Then next time you say that you will do a thing, I shall understand you to mean that

you will tell somebody else to do it—or, you won't. As Metcalf has seen so well to the mooring of the boat, I expect he has been equally careful of the beds and bedding."

What I expected was the case. There was nothing in the shape of a bed—not even a sheet—on board.

"How about the plate and linen?" I enquired.

We had routed out two knives and three forks to help us eat Metcalf's food; but that was all the plate and linen we could find. Fortunately, I had brought a rug and ulster with me—for, even in August, I decline to blindly trust the English climate—or I should have had to sleep, uncovered, upon bare boards. The others had to. They had left their luggage in the village, with instructions to send it up in the morning. There was some talk about walking to the inn. But, in the first place, they were tired; then, for those parts, it was late; and, in the third place, it was doubtful if, when they did get there, they would find a bed.

"The place is always crammed to the roof this time of the year," said Faulkner.

So they resolved to bear the ills they had, rather than fly to others which they knew not of.

It seemed to me that I had only just closed my eyes when I opened them again. Yet it was broad daylight. I looked at my watch. It was a few minutes past five. I had been sleeping on the roof of the cabin; its interior I had left to Faulkner and his friends. They were rugless. Moreover, I felt persuaded that with three inside, the cabin would have as much as it could hold. Never in my life had I slept in the open air before. When I found myself awake, I also found that I was shivering. Moving, I discovered that one cause of this was that the rug which covered me was sopping wet; it was soaked with dew. So were the boards on which I had been lying. I sat up when I realised these little facts, sat up with a groan, for I was stiff and sore, and my limbs ached as though they were a "mask of bruises." Apparently, like the paths of glory, my holidays bade fair to lead me to the grave.

As I sat, wondering whether my money might not be as profitably spent on doctors' bills as on the "Mignonette," and on Aitken's sweet society, I became aware that something was happening on the bank. It was, doubtless, that which had roused me. I got up, with difficulty, to see what it was.

There were three persons on the bank. One was the old gentleman who had insulted me yesterday, and two were evidently his myrmidons. He was superintending their operations. One of them was carrying a pole, and the other was doing something to the moorings of the "Mignonette." Suddenly the house-boat gave a lurch. The old gentleman said something, as though, now, he were pleased.

"That's right! She's adrift! Now, Gale, give her a shove with the pole!"

Gale gave her a shove with the pole, so violent a shove that he all but heeled us over. I thought, for a moment, that he had done it quite.

"Good gracious, man! What are you doing?"

My exclamation caused them to be, for the first time, conscious of my presence. The old gentleman looked at me, and smiled.

"So it's you, is it? I hope you enjoy drifting with the stream. Both together, my men, pole her clear."

Both the myrmidons took hold of the pole, and poled her clear. I thought that my latter end had come. If she had gone over, chilled as I was to the bone, and hampered with my clothes, I knew I should have been unable to swim.

"If I find you here again," shouted the old gentleman, "I'll not only cut you loose, but I'll prosecute you as well."

He might. If he ever found me there again I gave him leave to work his wicked will. Apparently the misadventures of the "Mignonette" had not aroused the slumberers below. I went down to supply this slight omission. Opening the cabin door somewhat suddenly, it struck against something hard. The something hard proved to be Aitken's head. He was lying on the floor in such a position that whoever opened the door was bound to hit him.

"Faulkner!" I cried. "Wake up!"

He woke up.

"Holloa, Lane, is that you? By Jingo, aren't I stiff!"

"So am I; but that's a trifle. We're not only stiff—we're adrift as well."

"Adrift!"

Faulkner sat up, rubbing his eyes. Aitken sat up too—rubbing his head.

"That old gentleman who slanged me yesterday has cast our moorings loose, and had us shoved into the centre of the stream."

"No!"

But a momentary examination showed that it was yes. We were drifting down the stream, broadside on, at the rate of about a mile an hour. Faulkner roused himself to a sense of the situation.

"We shall have to get into the boat, and tow the whole thing down to the village. Coningham's a beast, I've heard of him before; but I'll be even with Metcalf for playing us this trick."

A pair-oared skiff was attached to the "Mignonette." Into this we had to get, two by two, and strain ourselves, with a view of towing the "Mignonette" against the stream. My companion in the boat was Beadle.

"I don't know if you are aware that I am doing most of the work," he said. I thought, on the contrary, that that was very possible.

"I shouldn't mind if you did it all," I owned. "This sort of thing is not my line."

"Perhaps not. Nor is it mine. But it has to be done."

He was not a funny man just then. After we had towed the "Mignonette" about six yards—and she had to be towed six miles!—I stopped pulling; not that my ceasing to labour made much difference to our rate of progress, but I did.

"I have had enough of this. I don't see that it has to be done. If it has, I don't do it. I decline to pull another stroke."

There was a wrangle, but I didn't mind. I had my way. The "Mignonette" was allowed to drift from the village, instead of towards it. Presently a tug came along, with a couple of barges in tow. To the tail of one of the barges we were allowed to attach ourselves, for a consideration. And the tug towed us towards the village. On the way I had a little talk to Faulkner.

"I don't know, Faulkner, if you are aware that I am on my holiday."

"Of course I am. What do you mean?"

"Nothing. Only I am waiting for the holiday to begin."

"It's beginning now."

"Is it? I'm glad you told me."

"Have a little patience, and we'll soon get things in shape. By the way, I've been drawing up a list of some of the things we'll have to get. We'd better buy them. It's cheaper than getting them on hire."

He handed me a list. It contained knives, forks, spoons, glasses, a dinner-service, a tea-service, carpets—"just a little Turkish carpet or two to put about the place"—said Faulkner; chairs, all sorts of chairs, apparently, perhaps wanted for the

same purpose as the carpets, "to put about the place;" tables, curtains, beds, bedding, blankets, sheets. In short, all the furniture required to furnish a "bijou residence," and, when furnished, a jewel it would be. I handed him back the list.

"You don't seriously mean to say, Faulkner, that you expect me to join you in buying all those things?"

"Why not? It's cheaper than getting them on hire."

"Possibly. But I would point out to you that we are supposed to have got them on hire already. You told me that we were to have the 'Mignonette' for a month for forty pounds—furnished."

"Just so. Furnished as it is. You don't suppose we were going to find a lot of costly fittings on board for forty pounds? Why, the things on some of the houseboats cost thousands."

"Exactly. Now I understand you. What you meant was, that we were to enjoy the use of the 'Mignonette,' furnished—as it isn't. Thank you, Faulkner. I am obliged to you for your list; but I am afraid I must ask you to allow me to stand excused. You shall have my share of the forty pounds, and, for my holiday, I will go elsewhere. If nothing else swayed me, the presence of Mr. Aitken on board the 'Mignonette' would be sufficient reason. Under no circumstances could I consent to associate with Mr. Aitken. It is, perhaps, a prejudice on my part; but there it is."

"That's odd. Aitken says just the same thing of you. He says if you don't go, he will."

"That renders the matter delightfully simple. I will go."

I did. Faulkner, in a half-hearted sort of way, tried to induce me to stay. He assured me that when they had got things in shape—and purchased the furniture of that "bijou residence"—the "Mignonette" would be a paradise on earth. I didn't see it. I have seen something of houseboats since then, and I see it less than ever. Every man, and every woman, has his and her own ideas of enjoyment. Some men go to the North Pole—for pleasure! I believe none of them would walk there if they could get the chance. I prefer to stay at home, within easy distance of Pall Mall. I enjoyed my holiday immensely—upon the shady side.

MOUNTAINS AND MOUNTAINEERS.

THE tale is told of a certain English clergyman who, a century or two ago, ere

surveying engineers were a respectable and veracious class of society, journeyed from England to Tenerife. He had but one aim. That was to climb the Peak of Tenerife, that he might pray on his knees as near to Heaven's gate as he believed it was possible for a dweller upon earth to get.

I regret to say that the authorities, who have embalmed this little story, do not give us any particulars of the clergyman's climb, his sensations, and his subsequent descent. In those days, his experiences would have been made much of, and thought considerably more of than they nowadays would be. I dare say if he returned in safety to his little green village in old England, he was a hero to his dying day. And it is probable enough that, although his own sufferings—from loss of breath, fatigue of legs, the scorching sun, and the nipping winds, all of which are incidents of an average ascent of old Teide (as the Peak is called)—were trivial, later rumination and talk about them made him at length imagine they were to the full as terrible as those of the first English travellers who, in the seventeenth century, made the same ascent—in the interests of science.

It was a pretty conceit that made this clergyman fancy he would be nearer to Heaven upon the top of a mountain than when walking in the lowest street of his own valley parish. Of course, we know better in this age of scientific grace. Yet the echo of the tradition still lingers with us as a sort of consecration for our peaks. And in the East—notably in lands of the Greek Church—there is something not a little affecting in the sight of the small, white churches, which ardent, strenuous labourers have erected on summits many thousand feet above the sea. Still more stirring is the sight, upon a Saint's day, of the trail of pilgrims and villagers toiling up the mountain-side in the last hours of the night, that they may be present in the damp, elevated chapel for the mass which greets the dawn. You may imagine how the old folks pant, and rest, and then go on again in the strength of their hope, and with many a confident adjuration of the Saint whom they propose to honour with their devotions upon this day. The ultimate scene of the ascent is, however, almost beyond the scope of fancy. The sun's royal stride from beneath the ruddy horizon in the east is not to be told of in words, nor reproduced on canvas by the shrewdest of painters; nor can the effect of his flush of sudden gold upon the faces

of the devout, with their heads in their hands, be conjectured by those who have not been in such a throng as this.

The spectacle, common enough even nowadays, had its fellow in Mexico in the days of the Aztecs, those children of the sun. That, too, must have been a stirring sight—the day of the revival of hope in the hearts of the Mexicans. They mourned periodically, and humbled themselves before their Lord the Sun, whose movements they thought were always volitional on his part. At the end of each of their years, they were always oppressed by the fear lest he should decline to reappear. And so they broke their pots and pans and household furniture, and wrapped up their heads in cloths during the eventful night between the past epoch and the dubious future, and bewailed their sins. Towards the time of ordinary dawn, however, their hopes revived with the grey breaking of the heavens in the east. And then in long procession they gat themselves to the summit, or as near as might be, of a high hill, in the vicinity of Mexico; and when the priest on the summit first espied the edge of the noble planet coming up in his wonted manner, the news was passed with great shouts of joy, which journeyed along the line of the people, and into the city before the sun himself was above the horizon.

What an odd contrast, in truth, is that of our use of mountain-tops and theirs! To us, when they are not too high, and when the summits are attainable on the backs of asses and horses, they are sites for joyous junketing, and revelry of the most innocent and jovial kind. We build hotels upon them; even connect them with the sombre plainland by means of funicular railways; and, in short, sheer them of all their former awe-provoking features.

There's just one fear in prospect, as a sequel to the modern relationship between men and mountains. In the strength of our arrogant independence of Nature and her methods, may we not take it into our heads to try and cut the very hills from the face of the earth? A madman has already proposed some such plan as this for the pacification of the world. The Alps and all other the like excrescences are to be cast into the sea. These

Mountains interposed
Make enemies of nations, who had else,
Like kindred drops, been mingled into one.

Therefore, the mountains being removed, the first step in the universal brotherhood of people will have been taken.

But, thank Heaven, great as are even the present capabilities of science, they are not vast enough for this. It will not be done in our day. Our posterity may look out for themselves. Their ideals and habits of life will, of course, differ from ours; and so it is probable they will not miss the hills at all.

If, however, we must take even an initial step in so mighty a direction, why not begin with the volcanoes? We need not think of removing them. It will suffice if we put out their fires. No one can say that these, as such, serve any practical purpose. For the cooking of eggs in hot lava, and the entertainment of the various excursionists who stand gasping for breath on the edge of the sulphureous pits of their craters, can by no stretch of hyperbole be termed a practical purpose. They are not even so arranged that they may be adapted as gigantic stoves for the countries in which they are situated. Save the volcanoes of Iceland, which, moreover, are of the intermittent and not the constant kind, all those with which we are familiar stand up in lands which are quite as hot as they need be without any such additional heat.

It ought to be an easy matter for our scientific friends, and since it could not but be a benefit to the human race, why should not they undertake it seriously? George Stevenson has been immortalised for turning steam to commercial and locomotive account. Is it a bold thing to say that the man who puts a stopper upon Nature's ability to generate steam in her present erratic mode, will attain an immortal fame at least equal in extent to that of Stevenson's? We have paid toll of human lives, and the fruits of human toil, to these volcanoes quite long enough. We ought either to have a quid pro quo in the shape of a serviceable diversion of our subterranean fires, or else extinguish them once and for all, that the menace which hangs over the heads of so many of us may be removed.

But to turn from the fanciful to the real. Is there anything so exhilarating to youth as the first close acquaintanceship with the earth's mountains? The writer remembers, as if it were a jubilee, his introduction to our little giants of Cumberland and Westmoreland. What a joy it was beforehand to con o'er the record of their names, their slopes, hollows, edges, and topmost points; and to determine which peaks should be assailed and won! Obviously, mountain-tops are a famous

butt for our modern poets. But yet they are less sung of and to than a few decades ago. Wordsworth, who lived so long on the thigh of Nab Scar, may be called our bard of mountain-tops. He must have had great difficulty to keep any of his heroes in the plain. No matter how poor their worldly state, or how mean their physical condition, they think nothing of clambering from scaur to scaur and fell to fell, until at length they stand with the blue for a canopy. Of course they are philosophic vagrants, which solves the riddle. If their humour is contemplative, what can better befit them than such a standpoint, whence they can weigh earth and heaven in the balance of their hands; or, gazing like the wanderer of the "Excursion,"

Many an hour in caves forlorn
And 'mid the hollow depths of naked crags,

weave a series of pleasant and adequate fancies in solution of the various enigmas of life and the world, which come tripping along to view here as elsewhere? On the other hand, the less ready, but equally needy mountain-climber, was just as apt to console himself here as nowhere else for his poverty. What could a King from such vantage ground see more than he? Could Solomon in all his glory draw a stronger and sweeter breath than he, breathing against the west wind? Moreover, a King on his throne is beset with anxieties and responsibilities; whereas the beggar's hopes and fears all oscillate trivially between a crust and a lodging for the night.

Our age is, however, less disposed to take Wordsworth's calm, contenting view of mountain-tops. They will serve us better as sanitoriums: for the rich who need pure air, and for the undersized, half-lunged poor of the town who have hitherto existed, not lived. Wordsworth's melodious rhapsodies, though very true and very sympathetic to those who find them so, are futile to the poor whom it is our aim to help out of the mire and horrible stagnation, and worse, of their poverty. Fancy chanting words like these in the slums of Ratcliffe Highway:

How beautiful is Nature! He shall find
Who seeks not; and to him who hath not asked
Large measure shall be dealt!

To such, Nature were more bountiful if she set quartern loaves on the palisades of the streets of six-roomed cottages; and more kind if she would contrive it that all who honourably seek work—let alone an appreciation of her other mysteries—might find it.

In truth, it is neither the language nor the metaphor for our modern aims. The half-starved widows and orphans of the East End do not see that Nature is so very bountiful. They know only that labour is ill-paid; that competition is cruelly keen; and that they have every chance of dying prematurely from hard work, or of a dark old age in the district union. Perhaps Mr. Bellamy's Utopia in "Looking Backward" may allow things to be different in the year 2000. Then, but not before, Wordsworth may be "tasted" by the multitude, and found agreeable to the universal palate.

Mountains are, in fact, something like wine. Enjoyed in moderation, they are excellent. They elevate the spirits, and clear the brain of many cobwebs that life in the plains almost inevitably weaves over our intelligences. But a prolonged indulgence in them is as fatal as the draining of one wine-cup after another. It tends to weaken our hold upon Metropolitan life, of course. But it does more. It fosters the thinking part of our being at the expense of the working. And if it does not do that, it does worse. It may be a very vigorous promoter of individuality. That is all very well for the individual, if his character be worth developing to its utmost bent. But the individual in such a case swells at the expense of the community from which he keeps himself aloof. And it is certainly not to be endured when, by-and-by, his enlarged sense of his own importance urges him to decry as inferiors us who are toiling and moiling in the sultry plain.

On consideration, it seems rather wonderful that no great writer has written a book, tracing the descent of "anarchic and revolutionary principles" from the dwellers among mountain tops. The genealogy is not to be doubted. Even in our days there is plenty of discontent in the hills of lands, the plain people of which are tolerably resigned to the fortune which seems predestined for them.

Look at Corsica, as a brilliant proof of this. People think that this lovely island is quite reclaimed from its ancient taints of brigandage and vendetta. On the contrary, never since daily papers were an essential need of human beings, was the land more disturbed by intestine disorder. France is getting out of humour with herself for her inability to stay the growing spirit of evil. Where, thirty years ago, there were ten bandits—or persons outlawed for criminal

offences—there are now at least a hundred. In all, the murderers at large, among the thick scrub, the forests, and the bleak summits of the mountains, are several hundred in number.

There is no space here to explain why this is so. Briefly, it is due to the administration of the island, because this is not better fitted for the hot, eager aspirations of these mountaineers. The Corsicans of the valleys and the maritime towns do not go so far as to confess that they think the world, and Corsica in particular, is admirably ordered; but neither do they take up their guns and try to set the world's affairs in order, like their cousins of the uplands. With a little management, I dare say I could introduce any of my readers to a family of rogues in this department of France, who for forty years have braved police and magistrates to their very nose. They have blood in plenty upon their hands, are under sentence of death several times over; but they are safe. Their eyrie in the mountains is not to be reached; and their influence over the villagers at their feet is much too strong for them to be left to starve.

Islands offer a ready example of this leaven of disorder rooted in the mountains. Crete is as apt an illustration as Corsica. Assure his Moslem Majesty that the Sphakiots of the White Mountains, in this most troublesome province of his dominions, have once and for all time bowed their heads in servitude to him, and he will probably make you a Pasha, with a large annuity for life. For well he knows that all his troubles in Crete radiate from Sphakia. These stalwart mountaineers are not luxurious livers; but they have very luxuriant imaginations; and it seems to them, from their elevated, breezy villages, a monstrous thing that they should be subjects of a Moslem. Their co-religionists in Candia and Canes, though perhaps not less eager to belong to Greece, are less restive under the yoke. Probably, if Crete were transferred to Greece, the Sphakiots would ere long rave for independence, or excite a new political tumult, in the hope that their island might eventually be annexed to some other Power, willing to guarantee them against taxation, or the least restraint upon their liberties.

We of civilised and methodical lands do not fully understand the use that might be made of our mountains. To recur to my comparison between them and wine. Even

as the wise physician prescribes so many glasses of port to the invalid whose system wants fortifying, so we ought to be in a position to make our mountains serviceable for State and other ends. The clergyman I have mentioned believed his prayers would journey more speedily to Heaven from the Peak of Tenerife than from, say, the Lincolnshire Fens. It was a fancy that assured them a quick passage, and, therefore, seemed to justify his belief. Why should we not use our hills for the development of our politicians, whether fledglings or in full plumage? The mountain air, "pregnant with the spirit of liberty and toleration," might then give the death-blow to many an abuse and licensed tyranny which live and thrive in the stagnant lowland atmosphere.

MASTER AND PUPIL.

A STORY IN FIVE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER II.

JANET JEROME experienced some agreeable surprises on the pleasant May evening when her new guardian met her at the branch-line station that was nearest Sefton—which had no station of its own—and drove her over to that quaint little country town. The drive was a rather long one, through a plain pastoral country, just then at the height of its vernal period; and Janet had never before realised that a great public school could have its existence in the heart of the country. The discovery that this was actually the case with regard to Sefton delighted her beyond measure. Then, when they reached the town, she looked about her for a gloomy group of many-windowed buildings, with prison walls and hope-abandoning gates. It was thus she had figured the school-buildings; but here again she was pleasantly disappointed. The school-buildings consisted merely of the chapel, the great school-room, and the school-house. This group occurred in the centre of the old town, and the precincts were the reverse of gloomy. As for the boarding-houses presided over by the assistant masters, they were scattered—very literally—all over the place. This is a distinctive feature of Sefton. Half the boarding-houses lend substance and modernity to its single dilapidated old street, and the rest stand on a breezy hill half a mile away. Mr. Saniter's house was the most outlying of all, being situated upon

the farther slope of the hill, and invisible from the town. It was almost hidden in foliage, and entirely surrounded by a delightful garden.

As they came up the drive, Miss Janet got a momentary glimpse of the quad and the five-courts, which had a desolate appearance, for the boys had not yet returned. But what attracted her more was the ivy-covered wall—the western wall of the house—that flanked the quad. In this wall there were three long rows of tiny windows, one above the other; the panes of each flashed back the red exuberance of the May sunset; and the effect was the more striking owing to the setting of sombre ivy. These windows were the study windows, the master told her. At Sefton, every boy has his own separate six-foot-square den: another distinctive feature of the school.

The boys came back in a day or two, and Miss Janet made her first appearance before Mr. Saniter's house at midday dinner. It was rather an ordeal for a young girl brought up in a lonely parish; but, on the whole, Janet got through it very well. Sitting in her place at the Sixth Form table, under the wing of Miss Saniter, she was quickly at her ease. The Sixth Form table, one would think, might have followed its guest's example; but it suffered hopelessly from shyness and constraint; and as for the Dodo, who sat at the head of it, he made but one weak remark about the weather, became aware of its fatuity when made, blushed very badly indeed, and thereafter, hacked a seemly and symmetrical leg of mutton into a shapeless, mangled mass. All this was very painful to witness when you were not shy yourself. But at the other table—the long table presided over by the master—a buzz of low-toned conversation was kept up during the whole meal; and there was no constraint there. Janet peeped across at this table once or twice. She saw a long line of black-coated backs, and heads of hair of all shades, but no faces; for the boys with their backs turned were packed so tightly that the faces of the opposite row were hidden. Janet felt a wish to see the faces of some of the rank and file. The faces of these Sixth Form hobbledoys, if you but looked at them, became covered with pink confusion. When Miss Janet did see a lower-boy face or two, it was through the lower boys turning round to see her face. This she did not like, and she liked it still less when she noticed several of the black-coated backs shaking

with laughter. She peeped across no more. She was annoyed. She felt positive that the young wretches at the bottom of the long table were laughing and talking about her; which displays the element of self-consciousness in Miss Janet's nature, for all her country up-bringing. And there remained in the girl's mind, after this first ordeal, a poor impression of her cousin's house: the upper boys were stupid, the lower boys were rude.

The first impression of the house concerning Miss Janet was somewhat different. Most young women contrive to look well in mourning. They can scarcely help it—it is so becoming, so safe; and in the case of a blonde, it is not the poor girl's fault if she looks prettier and more attractive in her crape than she ever looked before. The latter was exactly the case with Janet, who was a little blonde of a pronounced, though dainty, type. She was pretty—there could be no two opinions about that. It was a clever little face, too—not without character. The blue eyes seemed quick and intelligent rather than sentimental or dreamy; and she was petite and taking; and her sad, sable frock suited her surpassingly well.

The boys took all this in. Boys have the sharpest and most critical eyes for personal appearance, especially for the feminine appearance. They have also a regrettable habit of making rude remarks, and remarks that are worse than rude. Yet Janet brought the images of their sisters into some boys' minds, and in such an unaccountable and vivid manner that they blushed as they laughed; and she even reminded one little miserable new boy of his mother, almost bringing the tears into his eyes. The fact is, there was something indefinably sweet and sympathetic in the girl's face; mere ordinary prettiness could not have had this effect; nor could a soulless beauty have driven the Dodo—who had too much soul for a school-boy—straight away to his study, to pour out some of it in original hexameters and pentameters. Yet this is what Janet did. And the little ode would scarcely have shamed the fervid Ovid, but for the extreme propriety of the ideas; and he dedicated them, just as Ovid might have done, to "Corinna," not knowing Miss Jerome's Christian name.

But the life of Janet Jerome, at Sefton, so far as concerned the boys, went forward behind the scenes. This, of course, was only as it should be; and Janet soon found

it a very interesting sort of life, and novel, as a matter of course. Everybody was very nice to her. First, some of the masters' wives came and called, and were particularly kind. They did not much care for Miss Saniter, these ladies; but this, when they found out what manner of young lady the little cousin was, only made them the kinder. They were followed by some masters who hadn't wives, and therefore, of course, were obliged to come alone. They came, it is true, ostensibly to look up their colleague, Saniter; but if this was not mere excuse, it was at least a conspicuous irregularity. They were not used to look up Saniter. But they grew used to it now. They soon got themselves invited to tennis. Saniter had a capital court, and he gave them the run of it, almost, to make things livelier for Janet; and they were very civil to Miss Saniter, who was not now quite so civil to them; and one and all they were kind and attentive and deferential to little Miss Janet. In mere gallantry, however, M. Delbos, the handsome young French master, stood alone; for, upon a harmless remark of Janet's about the garden and the flowers, Monsieur turned to her dramatically, with the palm of one hand upon his heart and the back of the other swept majestically towards her, and said with an impressive bow: "Zee fairest flower eez ders!" And that was in the girl's first fortnight at Sefton, while it was on the occasion of the dashing foreigner's initial visit.

So May went out and June came in. And Janet Jerome was made much of in the governing circle of Sefton. And, between them, they made her so happy that sometimes, when the mirror showed her a flushed and animated face in sharp contrast with her heavy crape, the picture of the Rectory and the form of her father would start up before her; and she would burst out crying, and despise herself for crying so little, and laugh no more that day. These sad moods never escaped the vigilant eyes of George Saniter; and he met them with a daringly cheerful front which would have been unbearable to the girl had it been only cheerful. His device was not so artless, however. They had subjects in common—subjects of engrossing interest to Janet, subjects in which Mr. Saniter had his heart. He worked these subjects in when Janet had been fretting.

There is always hope that a man of brains may become what is rarer—a man of tact. After the arrival of Janet, Mr.

Saniter began to add tact to his other undeniable qualities, and it brought out the flavour of those other qualities—it salted and savoured the whole man. And to turn another's sad thoughts into cheerful channels requires tact of the most delicate description. If the art is visible, it is worse than useless: if you are found out you are done.

Now it soon came out that Janet—so far from being a fool—was a wonderfully well-educated little girl. Her father, the Rector, with too much heavy time upon his hands, had lightened some of it by taking upon himself the education of his child. That the education became unconsciously what is known as “the higher education,” was due to a species of self-indulgence on the father's part. Francis Jerome was a scholar thrown away, who had felt his position keenly until his daughter's quick and eager intelligence came to the rescue with a billet for at least the elements of his scholarship. So he began teaching her for his own amusement; but the pupil was apt, and the studies developed amazingly, and soon they were being carried on with ambitious and not indefinite views; and thus, when Janet came to Sefton, at the age of seventeen—well, she was a cut above the standard of the Lower Fifth.

When Mr. Saniter made this discovery he was delighted beyond measure. But he would not own to much surprise. He had suspected as much from her letter, he said; besides, was she not Francis Jerome's daughter? It was not at once, however, that the master took to talking “shop” to his clever little cousin. It was not until one morning after an unspeakable “second school,” when he came into the dining-room, out of heart and out of temper—feeling as though every boy in the form had been a pair of tweezers employed in drawing the nerves from his body—and found Janet sitting alone there.

They had been construing Virgil in form, moreover a particularly vivid and striking passage, and a favourite one of the master's. For two mortal hours he had been doing his utmost to hammer this bit of fine narrative into the iron skull of the Lower Fifth. He had hammered it out of shape and almost beyond recognition; but he had not driven it in, even thus; and not one spark of intelligence or of interest had flown from the miserable mental anvil in the hammering.

The books were still in the master's hand. Contempt and disgust were still upon the

master's thin lips, and in the master's cold, grey eyes. A sudden impulse came over him. He came and stood over Janet, and opened his heart to her. Five minutes later his pale cheeks were glowing, his cold eyes lit up bright. He was going over the passage with Janet—the book lay open in her lap, the master read it kneeling at her side—and Janet was following him with ardent and apprehensive interest. Yet another five minutes, and the pair were laughing heartily as the master recounted the most memorable of the morning's blunders—blunders which, at the time, had made him gnash his teeth, and with difficulty refrain from swearing at the Lower Fifth.

And George Saniter was a happy man. The kind of sympathy he had craved for years—with a craving none the less strong because he only realised it now—he had found at last. He had found it once before—in Francis Jerome. So Janet was indeed her father over again, reflected small as yet, and in petticoats. And George Saniter had loved Janet's father.

But the master knew too little of human nature. Otherwise, it might have occurred to him that, though a little girl of seventeen may have an incredible love and aptitude for learning, and a head stuffed full of the classics, and a heart overflowing with abstract sympathy, for all this, she may still be not incapable of some of the follies common to her age and sex, if not to her sex at all ages. He did not even credit her with the simple, unthinking, childlike impulsiveness of seventeen. So something of a revelation was in store for him, and it came out one day when they had been talking the special kind of “shop” that was so attractive to them both.

“I wonder,” said Mr. Saniter, reflectively, “I often wonder if your father had any definite plan in going so deep with you as all this.”

“Yes——” Janet hesitated.

“Is it a secret?”

“No,” said Janet, colouring hotly. “It was only—Girton!”

“Girton? Was it really so? You never told me this, Janet.”

Janet could only nod; her eyes had filled with tears. Then Saniter understood why she had never mentioned the matter.

“If you like, Janet,” he said, earnestly, “you shall go to Girton yet!”

Janet gazed at him a moment with wide-open, swimming eyes. Then she sprang from her chair, ran over to the master,

kissed him upon the forehead, and fled sobbing from the room.

That kiss was a revelation to Saniter—and a double one: it showed him not only the girl's unsuspected ingenuousness, but some feelings of his own as well, which had been felt hitherto rather than realised. And the kiss burnt his forehead. The memory of it made him wretched. It set him brooding; it made him morbid. He could scarcely forgive Janet for kissing him now, and thus. But as for Girton, the matter was talked over calmly, without either tears or kisses, and it was all but settled that Janet should go there in the autumn. All but; because the master, perhaps, had already a counter-plot of his own.

Miss Saniter heard of the Girton plan with secret satisfaction, but, outwardly, with frigid disapproval. She snubbed Janet on the subject rather cruelly. She often did snub Janet; and the poor little girl bore it meekly. One afternoon Miss Saniter came downstairs and found her alone in the dining-room, slightly flushed, but animated and lovely, and evidently full of a recent experience. Miss Saniter saw all this at a glance; but she also saw that the door connecting the room with the master's study was open, showing that the master was out. Miss Saniter raised her eyebrows. Janet, however, seldom waited for questions.

"A young man has been in, asking for Cousin George," she said at once.

"A young man!" echoed Miss Saniter, coldly. "We have no young men here. You mean one of the boys, I suppose?"

"Well, perhaps it was," said Janet; "for he left this paper, and I think it's a proposition of Euclid written out ever so many times, with different letters each time. An imposition, I suppose, poor young man—; well, but really, Cousin Pauline, he does look too old to be at school!"

"What was he like?"

"Tallish, and slim, and very dark; and his eyes seemed rather restless; and he has quite a heavy moustache. But on the whole he is rather handsome. And he doesn't look a boy."

"No more he is," said Miss Saniter. "He has just come back; but it was quite absurd to allow him to come back at all; and I'm very glad it's his last term—at last. It was Mr. Newcomen."

"Mister!" Janet was puzzled. "Then is he a boy?"

"Well, he is in this house and in George's form," Miss Saniter explained; "but for all that he is 'mistered' in the school list, which means that he is an Honourable."

Janet was awed. "An Honourable!" The classics had taught her nothing about the aristocracy.

"Yes, Lord Pitcairn's son. Most of the masters 'mister' him in the 'call-over'; but not George, I am glad to say. He thinks it snobbery, and for once I agree with him. He says that if you call out the other boys' plain surnames, and they answer 'here, sir,' and you then say 'Mr. Newcomen,' you couldn't blame the young puppy if he answered 'here—confound you!' So George won't do it."

Miss Saniter was seldom so agreeable, so airy; but Janet merely said "Oh!"

"George thinks him a puppy," pursued Miss Saniter. The subject was evidently to her taste.

"Indeed," said Janet.

"Yes; he cordially dislikes the boy; he often says so."

"Then, of course, I shall dislike him too." Miss Janet was off her guard; and there was a shade of disappointment, and another of unbelief, in her tone.

"I don't think," Miss Saniter rejoined, promptly, "that you will have much opportunity of either liking or disliking him. You don't propose to make friends and enemies of the boys, do you?"

Janet felt small; she was intended to.